

Fast Facts

From Dr. Katz



"To ensure access to high-quality, patient-centered, cost-effective health care to Los Angeles County residents through direct services at DHS facilities and through collaboration with community and university partners."

May 16, 2012



A Message from the Director

We have four great hospitals. I sometimes worry that people think I don't fully appreciate our hospitals because I have focused so much of my energy on our ambulatory settings. But that's not the case at all. Every single day lives are saved and changed at our hospitals and people are comforted through life's most difficult moments. It is hard work and requires tremendous vigilance. A patient's life can be saved or lost by a single action, and I am proud of our staff for delivering that difficult care seven days a week.

One reason I have focused on our ambulatory functions is that compared to other public health care systems, they were underdeveloped. In contrast, Los Angeles has always had some of the best public hospitals in the country. A second reason is that I never want someone to have to go to a hospital because of an illness that could have been prevented or treated through good primary care. Hospitalization separates people from their families and can be economically disastrous when wage earners cannot go to their job because they are in the hospital.

But the main reason I have focused on ambulatory care, especially primary care, is that the survival of our hospitals depends on primary care. We have already experienced the transition of Medicaid Seniors and Persons with Disabilities to managed care. Under managed care, beneficiaries must choose a primary care doctor, not an Emergency Department. If we don't have primary care homes for them, we will lose them. Similarly, through the hard work of our DHS clinics and wonderful community partners, we have enrolled 132,000 patients into Healthy Way L.A. When these patients gain Medicaid in 2014, we want them to choose to stay in their primary care home and obtain their hospital care, when needed, from our hospitals. This is how we will sustain enough revenue to keep our system running. So, hand in hand, ambulatory care and inpatient care each serve a critical function for our patients and our health system.

O'Brien Named Ambulatory Care COO

Contributed by Lisa Finkelstein



DHS welcomes Quentin O'Brien, who was recently appointed chief operating officer (COO) of the Ambulatory Care Network. He will work with administrative and clinical staff centrally and at the facilities to ensure the patient has a quality and positive experience with their medical provider in the most efficient way possible. Prior to his appointment, he served for almost ten years as the Director of Health and Mental Health for the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center (LAGLC), and has been active in many community organizations through his leadership role on the board of the LAGLC.

"The creation of the ACN is a strong signal that DHS is serious about its intention to reconfigure health services in the County in order to align with the changing health care reform environment," said O'Brien. "I like a challenge, and this is a big one."

He brings extensive experience in healthcare as an early Health Crisis Manager and later in a leadership role with the DHS/SEIU Workforce Development Program. His knowledge, skills and aptitude will be great assets as DHS prepares for healthcare reform and implementation of the Patient Centered Medical Home. O'Brien received his Bachelors of Science degree in Public Health at the University of California, Los Angeles, and holds a Master's degree in Fine Arts from Yale University.

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DHS Turns Reforms to Cash

Contributed by Michael Wilson

DHS will receive a \$220 Million cash infusion from the federal government for implementing reforms tied to the state's Medicaid Waiver. The reforms cover a variety of projects, including enhanced patient data collection efforts, creation of patient-centered medical homes, implementation of a disease management registry system, and hospital patient safety improvements. The department expects to receive a total of \$1.2 Billion over five years through the Delivery System Reform Incentive Pool, or DSRIP.

"The money doesn't come to us by default, it's tied to meeting milestones," said DHS deputy director of strategic planning Dr. Christina Ghaly. "These funds were set aside to incentivize public health systems to make necessary infrastructure investments and promote meaningful improvements over time in patient care." Ghaly says DHS is on target to receive the maximum funding available to the County for all five years of the Waiver, now in year two. The funding is targeted for improvements in population health, patient experience of care, and cost of care consistent with the "triple" aim of health system reform.

DHS is focusing on infrastructure development, innovation and redesign, population health and improvements in patient care. Within those broad categories, DHS is adopting an electronic patient registry, expanding use of nurse advice lines, enhancing coding processes, improving public reporting, expanding chronic care management models, and integrating behavioral and physical health services in partnership with the Department of Mental Health. DHS is also enhancing data collection efforts to track quality within primary care medical homes.

Focused attention will be placed on improving patient safety in the care of patients with sepsis, as well as prevention of surgical site infections, central line associated bloodstream infections, and venous thromboembolisms (blood clots). "The work we are undertaking to achieve each of the milestones requires support by staff across DHS," said Ghaly. "This funding is critical for DHS to make the improvements that will allow us compete in the new post-reform environment."

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Rancho Leader Takes Patient Advocacy to National Stage

Contributed by Michael Wilson



When Gilbert Salinas came to Rancho Los Amigos Hospital two decades years ago as a patient, he needed rehabilitation to start his life over. Now he's helping hospitals across the U.S. innovate their care practices as co-chair of the Institute for Health Care Improvement's (IHI) annual forum. The IHI works to identify new models of care and make best practices widely adopted in health care organizations.

Salinas knows all about change. He turned a spinal cord injury into a source of energy to fight violence that has drawn the attention of former President Bill Clinton, the California State Assembly, and Los Angeles City Council

members. He provided input into the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services *Report on Youth Violence* and is a past chairman of the Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angeles.

"I started as a volunteer at Rancho and then went back school did a lot of work around violence intervention," says Salinas. Today, he serves as the hospital's Director of Patient Centered Care, handling patient complaints and working with the hospital's leadership to continually improve care practices. From his personal experience as a patient, Salinas says one of his proudest accomplishments is the patient advisory council that meets once a month to give hospital leaders input from the patient perspective.

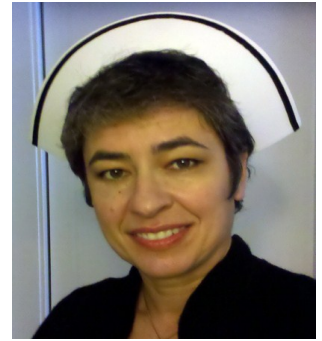
"All of us are inspired by Gilbert's focus and the impact he has in with patients," said Rancho CEO Jorge Orozco. "The Rancho community is very proud of his appointment, which will bring visibility to Rancho and the important work of safety net hospitals."

Salinas hopes his presence at the forum will drive greater participation in IHI efforts by public safety net hospitals. "I want to build national exposure for DHS and for rehabilitation at the national level. The big win is keeping up with what other health systems are doing, understanding what's coming down the road with health reform, and being the competitor of choice."

More information on IHI initiatives, including a biographical video of Salinas, is available on the IHI website at www.ihl.org.

First Person: My Journey to Nursing

Contributed by Yasmin Elming, R.N.



My dream of studying nursing began as a small child in my home town in prerevolutionary Iran. In those days we received the polio vaccine in a sugar cube, and my first memory of a nurse is of a confident, kind woman I wanted to become. Only after decades of travel, study, and experience did I get to the point where the letters "R.N." after my name were in my grasp.

The intervening years took me away from my secure childhood as my family moved from one country to the next. Each time I had to learn a new language and new customs. We found stability in Los Angeles, where my nursing aspirations grew stronger. I eventually became an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and served for many years in the California Army National Guard. Called to active duty, I became an Army medic in the small Emergency Department of our under-manned hospital serving a huge post in the Mojave Desert. I watched the Army Reserve nurses in amazement and realized how essential they were.

I spent the next few years taking on-line classes to complete my nursing prerequisites and found my way at last to the L.A. County College of Nursing. I have completed my studies and am just beginning to understand how this vocation fits me. The College's training program in County-run hospitals allows us to see the need in this city and respond to it and I want to serve these patients that need us the most. Whether among overlooked populations or alongside the strong men and women in uniform who place themselves in danger out of love for our country, I can now stand up and say with pride, "I, Yasmin Elming, am a nurse."

Patient Safety Focus: Teamwork

Contributed by the DHS Patient Safety Committee

Good teamwork is essential in the delivery of healthcare. Staff with different types of training must all cooperate to get the job done. Not only are doctors and nurses important members of the healthcare team, but other clinical and non-clinical staff are vital to the provision of care. These team members may include for example, clinical lab scientists, respiratory care practitioners, rehabilitation specialists, dieticians, administrative staff, housekeepers, facility management, supply chain, and many others. Patients and their families also play a central role in the healthcare team. Respecting and working together with all staff that are part of the healthcare team ultimately improves patient care. For more information about medical teamwork, the following article provides an overview: http://www.uwoanesthesia.ca/documents/teamwork_anesthesia.pdf

LAC+USC Lactation Program Draws Praise

Contributed by Michael Wilson

A representative from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Women's Health toured the employee lactation room at LAC+USC Medical Center in March as part of the agency's "Business Case for Breastfeeding" program. The initiative helps employers implement the federal law that requires them to provide private lactation space for staff that is not a bathroom.

"This is a good example of how a County-run hospital is involved in preventive health," said Kittie Frantz, RN, Clinical Instructor in Pediatrics at USC's Keck School of Medicine. "The employees using the room become knowledgeable about lactation, which they can share with patients to help them successfully breastfeed." Cathy Carothers, Chair-Elect of the United States Breastfeeding Committee, talked with employees about the health benefits of breastfeeding. She will also visit other private hospitals in the region to document how hospitals are meeting compliance with the federal law.

A recent study conducted by Cigna found that for every dollar an organization spends on lactation support for employees, it receives two dollars back in less absenteeism for mothers taking sick days to care for sick children and less job changing. Breastfeeding infants have also been shown to have less illness.

LAC+USC's lactation space is a full-size break room decorated with photos of babies blown up on the walls so moms can gaze at their baby's photo while pumping. The room includes a sink for cleaning pump parts, a refrigerator/freezer to store milk, and six electric breast pumps. 32 employees used the room last year and 14 new employees have registered this year already. DHS employees can visit the County Department of Public Health's website for a list of lactation room locations.

